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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on part of a larger study examining public/private school partnerships throughout the United States. It focuses on a limited analysis of data generated by respondents to questionnaires sent by the Forum for Public and Private Education to schools that were members nationwide and regionally of independent school associations. A more extensive analysis was provided by the results of a follow-up survey administered to a subset of independent schools that responded to the questionnaire. Existing university-school partnerships and corporate partnerships between and among schools were used as frames for analysis, because no significant research has been published on public/private school partnerships. The nature of the study, including lessons learned from university-school partnerships, was presented at the 2000 American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual meeting. This paper reports on specific activities in which different schools participated within their partnerships, as well as the varying levels of engagement and commitment to the partnership that partners accepted. The survey results revealed that independent schools and public schools were involved in many different types and kinds of partnership projects. They ranged from sharing alcohol-counseling programs to arts projects involving drama and dance. Based on the program descriptions provided, responses were categorized by their constituent focus as student-centered, academic (approximately 50 percent); student-centered, extracurricular (approximately 25 percent); and teacher-centered (25 percent). (Contains 10 references and 4 figures.) (DFR)

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Issues and Ideas Session
AATC Conference
October 5-7, 2000

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Side by Side: When Public and Private Schools Share Knowledge

This paper presents part of a larger study examining public/private school partnerships throughout the United States (Shinners '99). It focuses on a limited analysis of data generated by respondents to questionnaires sent by the Forum for Public and Private Education to schools that were members nationwide and regional of independent school associations. Responses to questionnaires provided essential data used as a database for locating the public/private school partnerships analyzed in this study. A more extensive analysis was provided by the results of a follow-up survey administered to a subset of independent schools that responded to the questionnaire. Existing university-school partnerships and corporate partnerships between and among schools were used as frames for analysis, because no significant research has been published on public/private school partnerships. The nature of the study, including lessons learned from university school partnerships was presented at the 2000 AERA annual meeting in a roundtable session. This paper examines the specific activities in which different schools participated within their partnerships, as well as the varying levels of engagement and commitment to the partnership that partners accepted (Shinners '2000).

The survey responses revealed that independent schools and public schools were involved in many different types and kinds of partnership projects. They ranged

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from sharing alcohol-counseling programs to arts projects involving drama and dance. Based on the program descriptions provided, responses were categorized by their constituent focus as:

- Student-centered, academic (approximately 50%);
- Student-centered, extra-curricular (approximately 25%);
- Teacher-centered (25%).

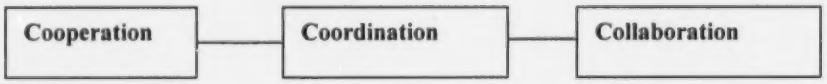
The word "partnership" is used in a generic sense in this study. Just as there are types of partnerships in a business sense, i.e., limited and general partnerships, based on aspects of their structure and level of risk, there are also different types of public/private school partnerships, which can be analyzed, from an institutional perspective. These, however, have not been previously described. After reviewing the types of partnerships existing in the social sciences, the framework for categorization was established based on the work of Mattessich and Monsey (1992), who provided the definitions used in the study for the levels of partnership efforts:

> 1. Cooperation activities are characterized by informal relationships that exist without any commonly defined mission, structure or planning effort. Information is shared as needed, and authority is retained by each organization.
>
> 2. Coordination activities are characterized by more formal relationships and understanding of compatible missions. Some planning and division of roles are required and communication channels are established. Authority still rests with the individual organizations, but there is some increased risk to all participants. Resources are available to participants and rewards are mutually acknowledged.
>
> 3. Collaboration activities reflect a more durable and pervasive relationship. Collaborations bring previously separated organizations into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission. Such relationships require

> comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operation on many levels. Authority is determined by the collaborative structure. Risk is much greater because each member of the collaboration contributes its won resources and reputation. Resources are pooled or jointly secured, and the products are shared.
>
> (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992, p. 39)

The three types of partnership efforts described move on a schema from less to more structured efforts. Figure 1 shows how each partnership type is placed on a moving schema from the least to the most formal level of partnership.

Figure 1: Schema of Partnership Efforts



Least Structured **More Structured** **Most Structured**

It is important to recall from the existing literature on partnerships that partners do not necessarily move through the levels of partnership, but that they may desire a less structured type of effort and remain successful within it (Teital, 1996; Whitford & Metcalf-Turner, '99). This paper describes the characteristics of each level of partnership effort, will categorize public/private school partnerships by category, and provide an example of one partnership effort that fits the category characteristics.

Public/Private School Cooperation

Description

Nine Cooperations were found in this study (out of 30 responding to the survey). Public/private school Cooperations were the second most common form of public/private school partnerships (Coordinations were the most common), and had the fewest potential definition elements of the three types of partnerships studied. Cooperations are informal partnerships that do not operate for a common purpose. They are loosely organized, with little, if any, structure or planning. Interaction and communication of information are based on need, and are not systematic or consistent. Individual partners retain control over the effort with little risk to any of them. Cooperations often have limited and singular goals, not lending themselves to a wider-ranging partnership. In terms of autonomy and ultimate control of the partnership, decisions in Cooperations are made separately by partners (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992). Cooperation efforts are the most self-contained, in that mutual interests are not necessarily taken into consideration. Resources are not shared, nor are rewards. Cooperations are located at the far left of the moving schema of Partnerships efforts shown in Figure 1. Figure 2 shows the number of public/private school Cooperations relative to the other two types of partnership efforts.

Figure 2: Distribution of Public/Private School Efforts by Category as Identified in 30 Responses.

When a private school teacher in a Cooperation offered foreign language instruction in a public middle school, for example, the alumni from the private lower school benefited because they, unlike the public school students, had taken the language in their private lower school. The language instruction was more of a benefit for the private school alumni. Lack of planning for mutual sharing of risks and rewards lends to Cooperations a perspective of self-interest similar to many existing university-school partnerships (Goodlad, 1993, p. 5; 1996, p. 228).

Patterns of Cooperations

Eight of the nine Cooperations held no compatible or common mission. For example a private school, Challenge Academy hosted a "Super Saturday village day of fun and learning" for local fifth graders as a community service. The Challenge students were trained to be community leaders while fifth graders

interacted with high-profile athletes and learned about substance abuse from them. The public schools participated in a joint activity, but for different reasons.

Three Cooperations had no structure. The Kittlege School/K Program hosted a once-a-year workshop for public and private school staff (not an ongoing process). Different schools were enrolled each year, and there was no evidence that a structure was in place to maintain school participation.

Three Cooperations engaged in no planning. The Primary Pathways Schoolhouse participated in professional development with the public school faculty, and provided a field and shared surplus materials and equipment. The school preferred "being able to act according to the moment, and collaborate when there were opportunities to do so," which indicated that very little planning ahead was necessary.

Four Cooperations took no visible participation risks. The Grieves School invited public school students to enjoy their grounds and to attend their performances at the S. Flowers Children's Theater. Grieves expended resources for their theater production and shared the performance with public school students, but, since public school students did not participate in the performance, risks taken were not for the Cooperation.

Eight Cooperations shared information only as needed. A member of the faculty of the Roland Gaul School taught a French course in a public middle school, to provide transition courses to the school's alumnae, since the public school had not offered French at that level. Communication channels at the Roland Gaul Cooperation did not appear to support the program consistently. In fact,

communication appeared to need improvement. Inherent problems with the teachers union needed to be resolved

All nine of the Cooperations' parent organizations retained authority over the activities and personnel in the partnership, making this characteristic the only commonly shared one. The Primary Pathways Program was sufficiently unstructured to allow the individual schools to plan, coordinate, and supervise partnership activities.

Six Cooperations kept resources separate. As a community service program, the Country School sponsored a tutoring program, which depended on contributing rather than sharing resources. The school sent students into local organizations to perform community service.

Eight Cooperations enjoyed separate rewards. The Kittlege School/Tutoring Program saw the benefits of the program mainly from their students' perspective: "To students, benefits included increased awareness of their responsibilities to the community; privileged students have a responsibility to give back to the community. It can be enlightening and empowering to show the benefits of [their] age group." Public school students' benefits were not evident or discussed.

Examples of Public/Private School Cooperations

Kittlege/K was the most well-defined Cooperation in that it had all categorical attributes. Kittlege/K hosted a kindergarten-screening workshop to which were invited local independent and public school teachers and administrators. While no mention was made of the public school objectives for the program, The Kittlege

School (private) participated in order to assess enrollment. Kittlege took no risk in offering the program because it was covered by fees. The school indicated it had no ongoing conversations with the public schools before or after the workshops. No students from the public school took part, while 80 of The Kittlege School students participated. There was no planning for the joint effort, even though the workshop required some scheduling. Planning for the workshop was done by Kittlege, which hosted it. No independent authority was granted to the schools, nor was there any evidence of structure to the public/private partnership concept of the schools sharing this activity. It was an event (three days a year) where cooperation existed on an as-needed basis.

Primary Pathways, a loosely knit teacher development program, was also clearly identified as a Cooperation in that it had six out of eight characteristics. Partners joined to share professional development with their faculty, provided field trips, and so on, when it was convenient, and communicated when it was possible or desirable. The Cooperation did not plan ahead nor did partners share objectives. The schools, however, acted like a Coordination when they made resources available to the program.

The Exploration Academy Program was in the process establishing its environmental-based learning program so that not all of the elements were in place. Therefore, as in Cooperations, information was shared as needed, authority was contained within the school, resources were separate, and no rewards were shared. Like Coordinations, however, they had established a compatible mission with the

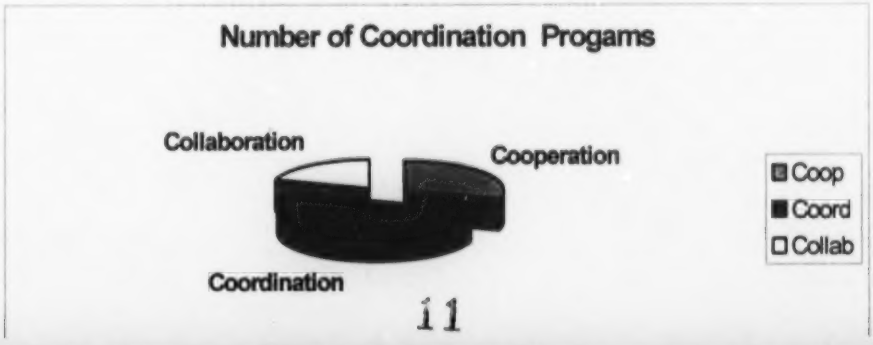
larger EXPLORATION curriculum project and were planning ahead to fund and schedule the project.

Public/Private School Coordination

Description

Fifteen (out of 30) Coordinations were found. In general terms, Coordination partnerships have a moderate amount of control over the life of the partnership, but ultimate direction comes from the sponsoring institutions (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992; Schon, 1977). In Coordination partnerships, types of organizational structures and leadership are important, and they also may also appear to differ from each other (Goodlad, 1993, pp. 24-32). Characteristics of Coordination efforts center on resource and benefit sharing (not necessarily mutual), common goals, and a commonly understood/mutually acceptable mission. Coordination partnerships were the most common type of public/private school partnership. These partnerships had the second highest number of potential characteristics of the available definition elements. Figure 3 shows the number of Public/Private School Coordinations relative to the other two types of partnership efforts.

Figure 3: Public/Private School Coordinations



Patterns of Public/Private School Coordinations

The most common characteristics among Coordinations were those of (1) partners retaining control of the Coordination and (2) partners in Coordinations experiencing mutual rewards. Other common characteristics included: (1) working towards a compatible mission, (2) planning, (3) willingness to take increased risk for the Coordination, and (4) making partners resources available for the Coordination.

Most Common Characteristics Held by Coordinations.

Eleven of the Coordinations had a compatible mission or reasons for doing the program with their partners that were different but not dissident between partners. The Alvah Briggs/Our Town Early Start Program shared compatible missions. The staff tried uncharted territory and started a program in which Alvah Briggs students wrote books for and read to the Our Town students. The goal of the program for the Early Start children was to expose them to reading and to have interaction around reading activity. The private school had a mission to improve community relations and improve the self-confidence of their students. The goals and mission for the program were different, but represented a good fit.

Planning considerations were visible in 11 Coordinations. The Take Flight School coordinated with the William Jennings School with whom they shared student activities. Key to their program's success was planning. The partnership worked when the program was designed "so that the teachers can coordinate materials." Planning assured that the activities got the students "in synch with each other."

Assignment of duties and roles is part of the Coordination definition), but little of it was seen in public/private school Coordinations. Only two programs (Redland and Snopes House) denoted assigned responsibilities, indicating the person who reports through what structured channels of communication.

Eleven programs were able to demonstrate taking an increased risk by participating in the Coordination. The notion of risk was viewed from the perspective of human and other resources committed. In the Redland program, the number of committed teachers and students on both the public and private side gave evidence to the risks participants that were taking. The private school committed 8 teachers and 98 students, and the public school involved 70 teachers and 8 students. In terms of increased financial risk, Redland funded their half-time service learning coordinator with a financial outlay of between $8,500 and $10,000 per year.

Fourteen of the 15 Coordinations maintained control and authority over the activities and personnel in their partnerships. The Belle Rivier School offered foreign language to public school students and some adults in the community. Although faculty from the state university participated, as well as a teacher from the local public high school, Belle Rivier ran and had total control over the program.

Ten Coordination partnerships were conscious of resource-sharing as it related to their efforts. Take Flight was conscious of making resources available to William Jennings School: "Transportation is key: also lunches and materials. The cooperating school was nearby so they [Take Flight] could provide transportation easily." They also considered the necessity of balancing the distribution of resources; "Things need to be

kept uniform and simple to find a common ground. The program must be designed so teachers can coordinate materials. One school can't be out of synch with the other."

Fourteen of the Coordinations described benefits for all partners. The Winston Program provided public and private schools with learning disabilities training. This was something that the private schools had wanted and that the public schools needed as well, according to the program spokesperson

Seven Coordinations reported established communication channels. The Alvah Briggs/Student Council project director encouraged other potential partnership initiators to "make phone calls and find out what other people are doing."

Examples of Public/Private School Coordinations

Urban Friends Academy had the most Coordination characteristics. In this program, private school students visited handicapped public school children. The schools had a compatible mission of giving their students a chance to interact with young people unlike themselves. Planning was needed, especially concerning transportation. The private school supplied transportation, the children had the mutual advantage of shared friendships, and communication channels opened among students as well as parents and teachers.

The Bryant had the characteristics of a Coordination. The program was one in which private school students planned projects for joint participation with public school students. The program did indeed look much like a Coordination: there was planning, coordinating, and provision of materials and transportation. However, one definitive element--establishing a compatible or common mission--was not evident. Bryant wanted to rid itself of its "gold-plated" image, but it was not clear what the goal of their partner,

the William Jennings School was. The Bryant School took on the characteristic of a Cooperation when the program had no common mission.

The Alvah Briggs/Student Council Program had less than half of the characteristics of a Coordination, which might have made it seem an ambiguous category assignment. Alvah Briggs belonged to the state association of student councils. Its students participated in this program within their school as elected officials executing the program, and outside their school by participating in the statewide convention. They had three Coordination elements and three Collaboration elements. They shared a characteristic with Cooperations, however, which made them less like a Collaboration than a Coordination. For example, they had a compatible mission with the public schools in the association, but not a mission they had established and revisited--the basis of a common mission typical of a Collaboration. They took increased risks through school exposure via student participation, but as in most Cooperations, they kept all resources, except the association membership fee, separate. These things defined them as a Coordination even though they, like Collaborations, participated in a new structure (the association), planned comprehensively throughout the year to implement the program (affects school schedule), and communicated through clear channels (student council meetings and association communiqués).

Public/Private School Collaborations

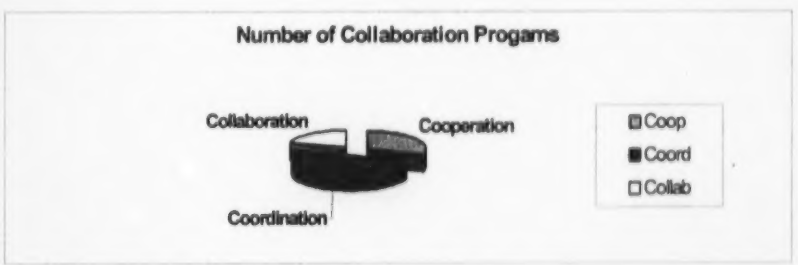
Description

Six Collaborations (out of 30 partnerships) were found in this study. Collaborations were identifiable as working structures and partners were obliged to give control of the partnership to the Collaboration, thereby granting it autonomy. Authority

was held by the Collaboration, as decisions were made and planning was done by and for the new structure. New relationships were formed which required clear communication channels, both internally and externally. Communication among members was open and frequent, informal and formal, internal and external. Driven by a common mission, partners pooled or mutually risked resources to enjoy common rewards (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992; Schon, 1977). Collaborations were the most structured form of partnership.

School Collaborations were the least common form of public/private school partnerships, yet they had the most potential definition elements for which they were tested. All partnerships categorized as Collaborations responded to all or most of the Collaboration characteristics. Figure 4 shows the number of public/private school Collaborations relative to the other two types of partnership efforts.

Figure 4: Public/Private Collaborations



Patterns of Public/Private School Collaborations

Regarding the number of definition characteristics possessed by collaborations, all of the definition characteristics applicable to Collaborations were seen most of the time

Five Collaborations could be considered new structures. The Christina School for Girls was a member of a countywide educational council of public and private schools whose purpose was to educate parents, teachers, doctors, and others on media violence using research on the topic. The council, an independent organization, included institutions such as public schools, hospitals, a cable television company, and a university.

All six Collaborations shared a common mission. Governors Academy participated in a Shakespeare project with a public school, which utilized the talent and resources of a prestigious library. Governors students participated in joint workshops with the students at the public school, at Governors, and at the library. The schools and library were committed to teaching and learning Shakespeare's works. In the process, Governors saw the Collaboration as "helping foster wider acquaintance for the students with people outside the school and mutual understanding." The program invited joint participation by structuring a project with a common purpose.

While Cooperations did not plan and Coordinations engaged in some planning, Collaborations planned more comprehensively. Five Collaborations recognized or provided evidence of comprehensive planning in their responses. The Raphaellite Day School Project demonstrated coordination and planning. As part of the program, it convinced the local cable television franchise in the city to install cable to all of the schools. When one school was excluded, it organized to write a proposal for $219,000. It planned ahead to address future needs by asking for money to support a consortium coordinator.

Five of the six collaborations had established clear communication channels with their partners. The Villars-Smythe Leadership Center was formed partly to enhance open communication channels among members. The spokesperson explained: "Discussions among administrators were held with the city's Assistant Superintendent. It's more than public relations. Open panel-professional not contentious. Meeting like this establishes confidence in each other--necessary to establishing trust for neighborhood schools."

Five Collaborations took greater risks than Cooperations and Coordinations. The Christina School for Girls sent six teachers to participate on the Media Violence Task force and donated about $3,000. They understood the necessity to back a vision with resources: "One person making it work--doing more than just walking the walk or talking the talk. Collaborating, learning how to piggy-back programs."

All Collaborations pooled their resources for joint use. In the The Villars-Smythe Leadership Center Collaboration, administrators from the Birmingham district pooled their talents to address "common concerns about families, drugs, alcohol, computer facilities, policy issues, sending mutual transportation busing." They contributed their time and energy to find joint solutions to common problems.

All six collaborations shared the benefits of their program. Government Academy participated in the Shakespeare program to make a "strong commitment to the neighborhood and wider community in the [school] area." In turn, the program was "helping foster wider acquaintance for the students with people outside the school and mutual understanding."

Examples of Public/Private School Collaborations

The Canyon School Community Administrators Meeting was a project launched by public school superintendents and a private school head with a common mission. They wanted to bring their institutions together by enhancing communication channels and to share resources such as buildings and library materials. Their program had features that differed from those described previously in this summary for Cooperations and Coordinations. The founders came together over a common plan, and raised money to link them and fund a person assigned to the collaboration (half time) to coordinate all participants. The intent was for all involved (teachers and students), including 10 schools, to be linked via the Internet. The schools further hoped that the shared resources would provide mutual benefits and friendly relations. This project represented a greater risk level than the programs earlier discussed. With 200 students involved in the private school alone, 66 teachers (16 of whom were trained in the summer), and a grant of $219,000 provided from the local college, exposure and financial risks were heavier than in the programs described in the earlier categories.

The Abkeni Teaching Institute embodied all of the Collaboration characteristics. As a consortium of 16 school districts serving more than 750 public and private school teachers, it offered professional development workshops. Abkeni was a new structure--one that schools with the common mission of improving professional growth looked to for providing resources such as conferences, institutes, and access to a professional library. Abkeni recognized the necessity of planning to support its vision and was dedicated to communicating to school staff how they could cope with educational and societal change. Abkeni was an independent organization with the type of formal

structure that distinguished it from the less formal partnerships discussed in the Cooperation and Coordination sections of this chapter.

The Government Public School Shakespeare Project was an example of a Collaboration which, while meeting most of the criteria for that definition (six out of seven), could not be seen as a type of formal effort, as defined in an earlier section. This was due to the fact that while it functioned as a Collaboration in most ways, a new structure did not emerge. Rather, several organizations worked with one (namely, the Shakespeare Library) where students from public and private schools performed Shakespeare's plays with professional actors and attended workshops with public school students. Resources were pooled, and funds, facility, and expertise merged into one project, which was housed at the library and theater. Curriculum components of the program were carried out in the individual schools, and drama teachers were sent to participate with the students in the program. Many rehearsals and classes required comprehensive planning, and the three-way participation (public school, private school, and the Shakespeare Library) revolved around clear communication among all groups. The schools did not detach their faculty, however, nor dispatch their students to the care of the Collaboration. They were still responsible for and maintained authority over them. Nevertheless, the level of their commitment and purpose placed this partnership higher on the continuum and closer to a Collaboration than either of the previous two categories.

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